

be a funding priority. It should be included in any comprehensive budget deal.

Somehow, in this very Chamber, people found a way to do a bunch of tax cuts. Some of them were there for the middle class, but a lot of them helped the wealthy. Somehow they found their way to that. Well, they had better find their way to include this because this is about working people.

We owe it to all Americans who played by the rules and worked hard throughout their lives secure pensions.

I stand today ready to work with our colleagues on the floor and across the aisle on a bipartisan solution. We all know that delay only makes the solution more costly. The time is here. We can't put it off any longer. We must move forward now to get this done for our workers, for our businesses, and for our country.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to speak as well about the issue of pensions, as many of my colleagues have been speaking about tonight. First of all, I want to outline a series of what I believe to be promises that the Senate and the House must keep with large segments of the American people.

Last year at this time, we were in a long debate, which had transpired over months, and the main issue there was healthcare for retired coal miners and their families. This was a promise made to coal miners across the country—thousands of them across the country and thousands in Pennsylvania alone—who were promised they would have healthcare in their retirement. That promise went unfulfilled despite the fact that we got a bill through the Senate Finance Committee, as we were instructed to do, to follow so-called regular order—have a hearing, have a vote, get it through the committee—but it was held up month after month, really from the fall of 2016 until April of 2017. That promise almost went unfulfilled, and it took far too long, but eventually we got it done.

At that time, we made another promise to those same coal miners that we would work on the pension issue for them. That was the second half of the original legislation.

When it comes to promises, we have promises to keep to those Americans who worked so hard in the most difficult job in the world.

We also have some promises that must be fulfilled. I would hope that the Republican leadership and Republican Members of the House and the Senate, along with the administration—one party in charge of two branches of government—would keep their promise to 9 million American children. The Children's Health Insurance Program is

more than 100 days overdue from being reauthorized. Everyone says they are for it, but it is not done. It was set aside to get a tax bill done, which, in my judgment, was a giveaway to the superrich and big corporations. Even if you wanted to support the tax bill, why couldn't you carve out some time by the end of the year, I asked the majority, to get the Children's Health Insurance Program reauthorized? Nine million kids; one hundred eighty thousand in Pennsylvania. Why couldn't you get it done?

Here we are now in the middle of January facing yet another deadline, and the Children's Health Insurance Program is not yet reauthorized. That is a promise. We will see by the end of the week whether the majority keeps its promise to those 9 million children.

The pension issue is the one I am going to talk about tonight, but there is also a promise that was made to approximately 800,000 young people, the individuals in the so-called DACA Program, the Dreamers. That is another promise.

The promise we are talking about tonight, at least on this side of the aisle in the Senate, is the promise of pensions. Why do so many pension plans face the obstacles, the burdens, and the crisis they face right now? The two main reasons are, first and foremost, the financial crisis, which wiped out stock holdings just as these members were retiring, and, of course, the second reason is substantial job loss in the industries that are affected by these pension plans.

While Wall Street and the gross domestic product have recovered from the horrific financial crisis that the country has now recovered from, but some people are still being hurt by it, and as the wealthier are doing better than ever—the number that was cited a couple of months ago was that since 1980, the share of national income—if you took all the income in the country, the share of national income held by the top 1 percent was 11 percent in 1980. That is a pretty high number for 1 percent. They had 11 percent of the national income. What was it in 2014? It had almost doubled to 20 percent. So when I say that the very wealthy, the top 1 percent, have done quite well—I have even used the word “bonanza”—they have done very well since 1980—I can back it up with a number, and that is the number. So even as they are doing better, and those other indicators might seem better, wages and opportunities for the middle class have stagnated, and our pensions have paid the price.

Workers across the country—including tens of thousands of coal miners, teamsters, and bakery and confectionary workers in Pennsylvania—are living with the worry that their pensions may not remain solvent. They played by the rules. They paid their dues. They put in their time for their companies. They and their children paid the price during the financial cri-

sis with their jobs and their wages. They should not have to continue to pay the price in retirement through reductions in promised pension benefits.

It is inexcusable and insulting for Americans to live with this type of worry, wondering whether they will have the quality of life in retirement they planned for and depended upon throughout their careers—careers of hard work and sacrifice, careers of giving so much to their companies and in many cases, so much to their country as well. Yet we have that uncertainty facing those individuals and their families. They are wondering whether, after decades of working in jobs that took a toll, in many cases, on their own bodies, they will need to go back to work so they can afford the heating bills or the cost of medication. That is insulting.

We must take action now to shore up our pension system, to keep the promise to the Americans who made our country what it is today—the greatest in the world, for sure. We know where Democrats stand on this issue. We are with workers. The question now is whether Republicans will work with us to get this done.

As I said before, Republicans have all the votes they need to get this done. They didn't flinch in December when it was a question of whether they would give \$13 billion in tax windfalls to the Nation's largest banks. All of that, of course, was unpaid for. We know where Republicans stand when it comes to giving away billions of dollars in borrowed money to large, profitable corporations. That was the tax bill that I mentioned before. We will soon find out whether they stand with workers when it comes to their pensions.

The Republican Congress needs to act now to make sure that we pass what is called the Butch Lewis Act to give retirees in Pennsylvania and others across the country the peace of mind that comes with knowing their retirement is secure. It is fundamental. This is a promise. It is either going to be kept, or it is going to be violated. This is the week to ensure that it is kept for those Americans who have worked so hard. They deserve these pensions. They have earned them. We need to keep our promise. The majority needs to keep its promise.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING THE REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose birthday the Nation celebrated yesterday. Dr. King once said: "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." These words are a specter, speaking to us now as though written for political moments precisely like the one we find ourselves in today. These words reflect the wisdom and tenacity of a man who deftly shaped his own moment and made our country better, fairer, and more just in the process.

Dr. King was a remarkable figure, perhaps most of all because he was an ordinary man—a husband and a father like so many others—who made extraordinary choices. In the face of a society that told him he must sit down, he chose to take a stand. In the face of evil and systemic bigotry, he chose to embody the tenets of love and peace. In the face of improbable odds, he chose to fight. As a result, his legacy of tolerance, respect, and equality is forever cemented in the very foundation of this country, and we are all the better for it.

Right up until the moment his life was taken from him, 50 years ago this year, Dr. King fought for an equal society, an equitable society, wherein we would judge one another not by the color of each other's skin, but by the content of our character. He was a shining beacon for all those who had come before him and all those who would come after, who, at tremendous risk to their own lives and livelihoods, have fought ceaselessly in the name of civil rights, fair wages, the eradication of poverty, and the right of all Americans to vote.

His wisdom still guides us even now, so many decades removed from his time here. When, in the 2013 case *Shelby County v. Holder*, the Supreme Court dismantled the Voting Rights Act that Dr. King was instrumental in passing, many of us vowed to persevere, to pass new legislation, knowing that is what Dr. King would have expected and would have done himself. Discriminatory practices such as voter identification requirements have made a resurgence in recent years, making it more difficult for citizens to exercise their most basic, fundamental right. Bigoted, hateful rhetoric has sadly continued into our lifetime, threatening the livelihoods and the dignity of people of color all across America. Misunderstanding of those from other countries or backgrounds all too often guides our politics, and fringe groups are all too often successful in stoking that fear into hate.

Despite all of this, I am optimistic about our future because, as Dr. King

put it best, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." That is the other half of Dr. King's legacy: hope—pure, undiluted, undeterred. We have tremendous challenges before us, just as he did then. I am hopeful when I watch Dreamers march on the U.S. Capitol, asking us to live up to our own promise as a nation. I am hopeful when I see women of all races, creeds, orientations, and backgrounds rally together as one, demanding to be heard, to be believed, to be counted. I am hopeful when I watch Black Lives Matter organize incredible, peaceful protests, keeping us all accountable, and I am hopeful when I see Americans of all different stripes join them.

Today both Dr. King's message and methods are as relevant as ever. He lives on in the footfall of peacefully marching protesters and in every word spoken in opposition to inequality and injustice. He lives on in the diversity of our college campuses and the all-too-slow, but steady, representation of people of color in our government. He lives on in all the ordinary men and women of this country who, every day, make extraordinary choices, like meeting hate with love, and the darkness of our troubled times with the light of their own hope.

Even in difficult times, through violence and denial, Dr. King maintained his dream, and as he said in the last sermon he gave in Tennessee, through every plight, he saw the Promised Land upon that great mountaintop. As we come together to celebrate his birthday, let us pledge to follow his footsteps up that mountain, to carry on his dream, until we meet him there.

REMEMBERING JOSEPH WILLIAM NOVOTNY

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the remarks I gave at the medal presentation to Joseph William Novotny's family on January 13, 2018, in Glendive, MT.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. Senator Jon Tester

Joseph William Novotny Medal Presentation
January 13, 2018
Glendive, Montana

Thank you all for being here today. And a special welcome to Emma Bartholomew, Kathy Hegel and all of Joe's family.

Today is a day years in the making. The efforts to get Joe the recognition and military medal he deserves has spanned years and generations of his family.

One of my greatest honors in the U.S. Senate is recognizing the service of the brave men and women who serve our country. Men like Joe who don't often seek recognition for their bravery.

It's my honor to be here today to present Ms. Bartholomew with her brother's medal. I will now read the citation that was printed in the United States Congressional Record, forever commemorating Joe's actions and the long overdue medal that now belongs to his family.

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the service and courage of Mr. Joseph William Novotny.

Joe was born in Wibaux, Montana, the seventh of eight children, and grew up roaming the plains of Eastern Montana.

Joe had recently finished his second year of high school at Sacred Heart Catholic School in Miles City when he enlisted in the military. It was a week after his 17th birthday, nearly a year before he was eligible for the draft.

He would serve in the Navy, spending two years on board the U.S.S. *John R. Craig*. Joe would be honorably discharged in July of 1950, days before the three year anniversary of his enlistment.

Civilian life wouldn't hold Joe for long. He reenlisted, this time in the U.S. Army, in time to deploy to the conflict of the Korean War.

On March 1, 1951, Private First Class Novotny's unit was pinned down by intense enemy machine gun fire. Before long, several of his fellow infantrymen were wounded.

Looking around him, at wounded soldiers, with bullets whizzing around them, Joe made a gut decision.

He was the division litter bearer, and he went to work.

In the ultimate display of courage and selfless sacrifice, Joe abandoned his covered position to run across the bullet-riddled terrain toward some of the wounded American soldiers. Again he found himself pinned down by enemy fire, before he could reach his fellow soldiers.

Several times Joe moved to reach the wounded soldiers in his unit. Several times he risked his own life to reach his peers.

It was only after a bullet struck his knee that he crawled back to cover. He received treatment in the field before being transported to a military hospital. He remained there for about four months before he could travel back to the United States.

Like so many of his fellow soldiers, Joe's injuries followed him home. By his early 50's Joe was relying on VA assisted living facilities as he struggled with his injury and subsequent related illnesses.

Joe passed away February 24, 2005.

It wasn't until after his death that his brother began to look in to Joe's service. While his brother passed away before his search could bear fruit, his niece Kathy took things up.

Today, I want the record to show that this was a man who volunteered to serve his country, not once, but twice, in two branches of the military.

A man who despite heavy enemy fire, risked his own life to get his fellow wounded soldiers. He only stopped once he himself was wounded.

A humble man who didn't speak much about his military service after his discharge, despite the actions that earned him four distinct military honors.

Joseph Novotny is an American hero, and I am honored to present his story and to ensure that it is celebrated in America's history forever.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

200TH ANNIVERSARY OF MEXICO, MAINE

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, today I wish to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the town of Mexico, ME. Mexico was built with a spirit of determination and resiliency that still guides the community today, and this is a time to celebrate the generations